

June 22, 2009

To: FAS Faculty and GSAS MacCracken Doctoral Students
From: Arts and Science Deans
Re: Announcement of Financial Aid Reform (FAR4)

We are pleased to announce that the University Administration has agreed to authorize FAR4.

Since the establishment of the MacCracken program in 1992, the goals of financial aid reform have been and remain straightforward: improve our ability to attract top doctoral candidates; lower attrition rates; reduce time to degree; and provide maximum flexibility to departments to design financial aid packages that work best for their disciplines. The FAR4 framework is fully consistent with each of these goals.

FAR4 provides a base support package that includes a full tuition scholarship, fellowship stipend, health insurance premiums and fee remission for the term of the guaranteed financial aid package. Health insurance premiums and fee remissions will continue for two additional years if a doctoral student is still working on his or her dissertation. The total value of this base support package is in excess of \$225,000 per MacCracken fellow.

The only conditions placed on this financial aid package are that the student is in good academic standing, making acceptable academic progress towards the doctoral degree, and meeting the Graduate School's 7-year rule for financial aid eligibility (with normal exception conditions). This is a significant change from the current financial aid structure in which students are obligated to teach as a condition of receiving financial aid.

Under the FAR4 framework, students will be compensated separately as part-time (adjunct) instructors when they do teach, thus providing them with increased financial support beyond the base support package.

The FAR4 framework provides departments the freedom to create the type and amount of teaching opportunities that are most relevant for their students and also to determine the most advantageous timing for students to be teaching (if they so choose) as they progress through the academic requirements of the doctoral degree (what we have been calling the department's "roadmap"). These roadmaps vary considerably from department to department, with some departments suggesting that it is best to offer teaching opportunities early in a student's matriculation and others wanting to provide such opportunities later, but in no case is the total amount of recommended teaching greater than would have been required under FAR 3. In most cases it is considerably less, and of course it is not required for successful completion of the degree.

In consultation with their departments, students will also be able to manage their fellowship support to a much greater extent than is now the case. In particular, they will have the opportunity to use the additional compensation they will receive for teaching to reserve portions of their MacCracken fellowships to be drawn upon in subsequent semesters, thus increasing the time they are supported. The same is true of any external support they may be awarded.

In brief, FAR4 provides both departments and students a great deal of additional flexibility and freedom. Departments can design financial aid

packages and teaching opportunities in a way that best suits their disciplines, and students can manage their fellowship support in a way that best supports their needs and their own pace of study.

During the Spring semester, the Arts and Science deans discussed FAR4 with a number of Arts & Science and University committees including Policy & Planning, the GSAS Financial Aid Committee, the Arts & Science Chairs, the FAS Faculty Senators, the Provost Committee on Academic Priorities, the GSAS Directors of Graduate Studies, the CAS Directors of Undergraduate Studies, the leadership of the GSAS Graduate Student Council, and numerous ad-hoc student groups. Over the course of these conversations, a consensus emerged that the FAR4 framework was advantageous to students and would advance the goals of increased attractiveness, reduced attrition, and improved time to degree. At the same time, a number of concerns were raised with regard to implementation. Because each department has its own set of individual needs, the Dean's Office worked with each department to address these concerns in ways that were customized to the department's particular situation and needs.

The purpose of these departmental consultations was to determine whether FAR4 was both workable and affordable. To do so, we worked with each department to develop a Curriculum Staffing Plan that models how the department's teaching responsibilities would be covered under FAR4. We also asked each department to develop its own roadmap that lays out how the department would advise its students to time teaching opportunities and how best to manage the timing of fellowship payments in order to best support their academic work. Based on these curriculum staffing plans and roadmaps we are now confident that FAR4 satisfies the criteria of being workable and affordable. As a result, the University Administration has given us the authorization to move ahead.

This is a major statement of support by NYU about the importance of doctoral education. With this support comes the expectation that Arts and Science will use FAR4 to continue and indeed accelerate the accomplishments of the previous financial aid reforms with respect to the recruitment of the most outstanding students, the timely training of these students, and the successful placement of them upon graduation. Since these have long been our core goals, this is a challenge we happily accept.

Our conversations with departments have not only confirmed the benefits of FAR4, they have also led to guidelines for the implementation. These guidelines have already been sent under separate cover to the Chairs, Directors of Graduate Studies, Directors of Undergraduate Studies, and the relevant staff members of each department. The key features of these guidelines are:

- Departments have developed Curriculum Staffing Plans as part of FAR4 modeling that include the departmental and collegiate courses that they are responsible for staffing. Beginning in 2009-10, teaching assignments should conform to the Curriculum Staffing Plans developed as part of FAR4 modeling.
- The Curriculum Staffing Plans include extensive opportunities to teach such that every student who wishes to teach can be guaranteed the opportunity to do so. Accompanying these teaching opportunities will be expanded graduate student teacher development programs.
- Under FAR4, when MacCracken fellows teach they will be compensated separately (above and beyond) their stipend. This policy will take effect in

2009-10 for all new and continuing MacCracken fellows.

Implementation will be phased in for continuing students as follows:

-- Post MacCracken students. Departments can count on having the same number of post-MacCracken support lines for 2009-10 and 2010-11 that they have had on average in recent years. The financial support for these post-MacCracken students will be a combination of fellowship and part time (adjunct) instructorship.

-- Continuing MacCracken Fellows. All continuing students will be appointed either as fellows or research assistants on externally funded grants. Students who have remaining teaching obligations under the terms of their financial aid awards can be required to teach in order to meet the department's Curricular Staffing Plans.

-- Flexibility in managing fellowship guarantees. Students will have the opportunity to time fellowship payments to best support their course of study.

We know that students especially will have questions, both about general policies and about their particular circumstances. So, we will be developing a more detailed set of policies and procedures over the next month and will share these with you as soon as they are available. We will also have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that will be on the GSAS web site later this summer. Finally, GSAS will announce an email address for student questions later this summer that students may use for any questions that remain after those documents are published. As departments plan for next year, GSAS will work with students on managing the individual circumstances of their MacCracken awards and teaching opportunities.

We wish to thank the entire faculty, students, and staff whose questions and comments were of such help in the design of FAR4.